

SRC Calendar:

Mon.,
April 4

- **8:30 am:** Caucus
- **10 am – noon:** Senate Session
- **10 am:** Senate Transportation Budget News Conference, SHR 1
- **1:30 – 5:30 pm:** Senate Ways & Means (SHR 4, TVW)
- **1:30 – 5:30 pm:** Senate Transportation (SHR 1)

Tues.,
April 5

- **7:15 am:** Legislative Fellowship (JAC ABC)
- **9 am – 5:30 pm:** Senate Session/Caucus (possible evening session)
- **11 am – 2 pm:** 10,000 Steps for a Healthier Washington (Heritage Park, est. attend 200)

Wed.,
April 6

- **8 – 10 am:** House Capital Budget possible exec session of HB 1057 – House capital budget (HHR A, TVW)
- **9 am – 5:30 pm:** Senate Session/Caucus (possible evening session)
- **noon – 1 pm:** Reception for the 50th Anniversary of the Legislative Intern Program (JAC ABC)

Thurs.,
April 7

- **Sen. Schmidt's Birthday**
- **9 am – 5:30 pm:** Senate Session/Caucus (possible evening session)
- **3:30 – 5:30 pm:** House Appropriations possible exec session of HB 2297 – House budget (HHR A, TVW)
- **7 – 8 pm:** *Inside Olympia* with guests Helen Sommers and Gary Alexander to discuss the House budget (TVW)

Fri.,
April 8

- **Sen. Benton's Birthday**
- **9 am – 5:30 pm:** Senate Session/Caucus (possible evening session)
- **1:30 – 3 pm:** History of the WA Legislature seminar (SHR 4)
- **9 – 10 pm:** *Olympia On-Call* (TVW)
- **10 – 11 pm:** *Legislative Week In Review* (TVW)

Sat.,
April 9

- Possible Senate Session/Caucus

Sun.,
April 10

- **Sens. Carrell and Benson's Birthday**

Senate budget

The Senate Democrats passed their proposed spending package on March 30 after rejecting Republican amendments which would have saved taxpayers more than \$450 million. Because their bill to undo Initiative 601 and allow tax increases without a supermajority vote has not yet been signed into law, Democrats did not pass the roughly \$500 million in new taxes they proposed to pay for their spending.

REJECTED COST-SAVING REPUBLICAN AMENDMENTS

- **Restore six-month income verification** for children's medical coverage to ensure only families who truly need free coverage receive it and to prevent fraud. (saves \$33 million)
- **Government Tort Liability Reform** to reduce the state's exposure to lawsuits (saves \$40 million)
- **Time Limit General Assistance** to six months in any consecutive two-year period and encourage long-term disabled to use available federal assistance. Limit GAU to 12 months lifetime for non-citizens not eligible for federal assistance (saves \$79 million)
- **One-Year Bilingual Education Immersion** to reduce length of time in bilingual programs and help children succeed (saves \$15 million)
- **Contracting Out** to complete the three-legged stool of government reform that includes civil service reform, collective bargaining and contracting out (saves \$50 million)
- **Stop Subsidizing Career Students** by requiring students with more than 125 percent of the credits required to complete their degree to pay the full price of their college education with no state subsidy (frees up 1,648 higher education slots)
- **10 percent reduction in travel and personal service contracts** (saves \$20 million)
- **Reduce State-Funded Anti-Smoking Advertising** (saves \$71 million)

Other Republican amendments to address state priorities, such as fully funding state pension payments, closing the Fircrest School, eliminating the state parks fee and preserving state environmental accounts, were also rejected. House Democrats will release their budget next week. The final 2005-07 operating budget will likely be a compromise between the two plans that will be worked out in a joint House and Senate conference committee -- where Democrats will have the majority of votes.

SRC in the News

On the Senate budget:

- **Sen. Joe Zarelli**, R-Ridgefield, the ranking Republican on the Ways and Means Committee, called the Democrats' budget "unsustainable, irresponsible and unstable." In a statement, he said: "It completely abandons the idea of prioritizing government services and goes straight for the taxpayers' pockets." (*Seattle Times*, 3/29/05)
- **Sen. Bill Finkbeiner**... said, "There's this constant refrain about the regressivity of our tax system, and then they decide to go out and tax cigarettes and booze. If you are going to tell me that is going to be paid more by upper income folks, I'm not going to believe that (because consumption-based taxes are more regressive)." Overall, Finkbeiner said the Senate budget "represents the most minimal of cuts and a huge inclination to raise taxes." (*Seattle PI*, 3/29/05)